Mr. MEEK of Florida. If the gentleman will yield, I wear a size 15. I don't think that you probably can stand in my shoes with your shoes on.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. It would be pretty tight.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we thank Speaker PELOSI for allowing us this time. We can always be found at 30–Something Working Group on the Speaker's Web site, www.speaker.gov.

## WHAT IS CONGRESS' PLAN FOR AFFORDABLE ENERGY?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ARCURI). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about a different subject than you've been hearing about, one that I think should be talked about in the halls of Congress here: What is Congress doing about available, affordable energy for America?

I know it's Halloween, but when we find out the price of oil today on the market, we are all going to think it's a Halloween joke.

First, I want to show the record of oil prices, of how they have been rising. Now, this doesn't show the spikes up and down all along. These are annual average prices.

Just last week I was here speaking and we were at $90. But today I think we're off this chart because at the close of business on Wall Street today, oil was $94.53 a barrel.

I don't know about you, but that puts fear in my heart. The winter season is coming. People are going to need to keep their homes heated. People are going to need fuel to drive their cars. The American economy is going to need affordable energy to compete in the global economy. On October 31, 2007, oil closed at $94.53.

Now, 6 years ago, it doesn't show it on the chart, but 6 years ago, natural gas was $2 a thousand; now it's $8. Oil was $16. This is a 600 percent increase in oil prices in just 6 years.

Is it an issue? It hasn't been mentioned here today. It wasn't mentioned here yesterday. It wasn't debated last week. We are going to have record high home heating oil prices for those heating their homes, record high diesel prices for those who are transporting our goods up and down the highways, and so I guess the fair question is, what is Congress's plan for affordable energy for America?

Months ago I was down here on the floor and debated the House bill. The House passed a bill. We'll talk about it later in content. And simultaneously a little later, and the Senate is usually a little behind, they passed a bill. Now, you would think with energy prices spiking to record levels, there would be some sense of urgency in Congress. There would be some sense of urgency to get the Senate bill and the House bill together and get it on the floor to help Americans meet their energy needs.

Now, we have had some interesting things happen here. Speaker PELOSI forced the curator, those who run the Capitol here, to switch from coal to gas so we could lessen our carbon imprint. Now, that's going to cost the taxpayers $3 or $4 million because gas is the clean, green fuel and she thought it was better that we heat the Capitol with gas and not coal. Now, what is interesting is it would seem like we should be about conserving. I haven't seen a dollar appropriated to put double-pane windows in all of the Capitol complex. Most of them are single-pane glass. Now, most of us at home have done better than that. My office building, single-pane glass. On a cold winter day it frosts right up. It transmits lots of heat out, lots of heat in. Depending on where the heat is, it goes right through single-pane glass. But wouldn't it make more sense to conserve energy in the Capitol complex and do energy efficient windows and doors? No, we just switched fuels and spent an extra $4 million so our carbon imprint was less.

Now, we have also mandated that all government agencies, including ourselves, use those little round fluorescent screw-in light bulbs. I have some at home. My wife doesn't like them. I don't like them if it's a reading light. At least they vary. They are not the same quality of the incandescent bulb we are used to. We're spoiled. But we have mandated those in every appropriations bill this year, and what's disappointing, though, is that they are all made in China. We are mandating that our light bulbs come from China.

Now, while we talk about energy, we can talk about why we have such high prices. I want to switch charts here. And here we have a chart of the percentage of imports for America. Now, this chart is a little behind. It actually is almost up to 70 now. Every year we increase dependence on foreign, unstable countries by 2 percent. That's in the last decade. Every year. I think that number is going to increase, and I will explain to you why later, that it may even go up faster.

Now, while we are becoming more and more dependent on foreign oil, we have countries like China and India, and this is one of the reasons for high energy prices today. We have always been the only big user. We have always been the big dog economically. Well, we're one of the pack now. There are a lot of big dogs out there. China and India's energy use is increasing between 15 and 20 percent a year. They are building a coal plant in China every 5 days. They are opening a new nuclear plant for electricity every month. They are building the largest hydrodams ever known in the world routinely. They are buying up oil and gas reserves and making deals with other countries all over the globe so that China has the energy it needs to run its country. What is America doing? We will talk about that.

America does not have an adequate sense of urgency about providing energy for America, affordable energy for America. We passed a bill in 2005 that had a lot of positive incentives. But the problem is when you pass a bill, it's years before you have production of energy. And many of the incentives that were in that bill, many of the things that were helping us produce more energy are now being tried to be rolled back by the Democrat bills that are going to come before us, that have come before us, and will come back before us again in a conference report, and we will talk about that in more detail.

What does America want us to do? Well, the Americans I talk to, they want to be able to afford to heat their homes and drive a decent car. They'd like to be able to afford to buy food and other things after they pay their energy bills.

Now, these energy bills that have been passed some months ago have been languishing. I haven't heard much discussion. In fact, I haven't heard of a conference committee meeting.

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It doesn't seem like 3 weeks ago when we had $80 oil; that was enough sense of urgency. It doesn't seem like last week when we had $90 oil; that was enough sense of urgency. And here we are at $94.53 oil, and that doesn't seem like enough sense of urgency. Now, reading the Wall Street Journal today, the article was scary, it said, ''We don't expect oil to stop at 100.''

Now, I expected energy to get expensive this year. I've been predicting it. And I had someone say, How did you know that? And I said, You've just got to be watching what's going on. There's an oil shortage in the world. There is tremendous demand because all the developing countries are now driving cars and have factories and are using energy. And specifically the big ones, like China and India, their economies are growing at record paces, are consuming a lot of energy. And we're going to be competing with them down the road.

What scares me, and I'm going to put $94.53 back up here, because that's correct. Here is what's scary about $94.53 oil. We, for the first time in many years, have not had a storm in the gulf. Every time we have a major storm in the gulf, it reduces supply of oil and gas; about 40 percent of our energy comes from the gulf. So when a storm like Katrina or Rita hits the gulf, or even one not as severe as them, it shuts in a lot of oil for weeks and months, and any damage that's done to rigs or refineries or pipelines or processing stations for the gas, it just shuts down capacity. We get a lot less energy after a Katrina. Some of those were not repaired for 9 months to a year, and that energy is just lost. You just don't get it because you have to keep producing every day.